



Grace Notes
December 2011 & January 2012



Lord is Coming!

On Sunday, Nov. 27th, Christians everywhere entered the Season of Advent which marks the beginning of our journey toward Bethlehem. ***“Advent” means our Lord is coming!*** During this season, we have the opportunity to celebrate and embrace the “coming” of our Lord Jesus from *ages past, here and now, and for tomorrow.*

Advent Means the Lord is Coming! From ages past...

Humanity has ached with longing for some power to set things right, to calm the beast, curb the tyrant, and bring peace to the soul. The Lord we have longed for and rested in His promise – to give us hope, has come. His name is Immanuel, God-with-us.

Advent Means the Lord is Coming! Here and now...

In the proclamation of the Good News, in the sharing of bread and wine, in the Word of forgiveness, in the fellowship of the church, in the needs of neighbors, and from the Spirit of God, God is with us here and now.

Advent Means the Lord is Coming! For tomorrow...

There is coming a day when again an angel will appear to herald the coming of the Messiah, but this time the coming will be imminent and immediate. Scripture tells us that the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout of the archangel and the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we who are alive and remain will be caught up to the clouds to be with the Lord forever.

The Lord is coming! Are you ready? Now is the time, during this period of grace, to prepare yourself to meet the Lord. Have you repented of your sin and received the salvation that Jesus offers? Have you turned from sin and turned to righteousness? For surely our King is coming. So on this journey to Bethlehem, let us prepare ourselves to meet Him on that great day.

Prayer

*Come, Lord Jesus, God-with-us!
 Strengthen us to go boldly and unafraid into tomorrow, to go without calendar or map,
 and to go walking toward eternity. Amen.*

From my family to yours, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

WORSHIP WITH US...
9:15 am Sunday School, all ages! 10:45 am Worship Communion is served the 1st Sunday of each month

UPCOMING EVENTS

Night of Music

Sun, Dec 4, 6pm

is a festive celebration of Christmas music and worship at 6 pm on Sunday, Dec 4, followed by sweet treats and coffee in Fellowship Hall.

Potato Sausage Project

Mon, Dec 5

This wonderful traditional holiday sausage is \$3/ pound. Monday, Dec 5th, starting @ 8 am the church will be busy with volunteers making the sausage. Please pick up your orders between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, Monday, Dec 5

Jul Fest

Thur, Dec 8, 6pm

An annual ladies event at GCC. The evening will include a Scandinavian themed smorgasbord and program. This year's program theme is "The Light of Christmas". Serving group leaders will be contacting their list about responsibilities to JulFest. A few good men, would be appreciated, who can help with the clean-up (and to enjoy the meal).

Special Congregational Meeting

Sun, Dec 11, immediately following worship

following worship, Dec 11, regarding new members.

20/30's White Elephant

Fri, Dec 15, 6pm

Grace Covenant Church, Fellowship Hall

Contact Megan Moberly for more information.

Senior High Progressive Dinner

Sun, Dec 17, 4:30 pm

From the GCC parking lot

will start from the church at 4:30 pm on Sunday Dec 17. See Linnea Johnson or Lisa Hjelm for details.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship

Sat, Dec 24, 9pm

Christmas Day, Sunday, we will hold worship at the regularly scheduled time, but there will be no Sunday School programs. The offering will be split evenly between Mission Bible Training Center (MBTC) and the Benevolence Fund.

New Year's Eve Progressive Dinner

Sat, Dec 31, 5pm

The evening will begin at the church parking lot and conclude with a time of worship and communion. Ed & Sylvia Lindwall are coordinating. Please let them know if you would like to participate.

Men's Ministries - Wildcat Hockey

NMU, Marquette

Saturday, Jan 7th

Men's Ministries is organizing a trip to Marquette to catch a hockey game at Berry's Event Center on the campus of Northern Michigan University (Fair & 3rd Street). This trip is for all members and friends of the Grace family. The NMU Wildcats will be taking on Alaska-Fairbanks beginning at 7:30 PM (ET). We plan to depart from the church at 3 PM (CT) and stop for dinner in Marquette at Buffalo Wild Wings (2500 US-41 West). Game tickets are \$6.00. *Please make payment to Mark Lindahl, Wayne Sherwood, or the*

church office by Wed., Dec. 28th. Checks can be made out to Grace Covenant Church, earmarked "Hockey Game."

Installation of new Council Officers

Sunday, Jan 8th

During our worship service, we plan to install our newly elected officers to their ministry positions. We thank God for those who served past offices and committees and look forward to those that have recently committed their time and talents to the ministry of Christ through GCC.

Council Meeting

Thurs, Jan 12th, 6:00 PM,

Grace Covenant Church Conference Room

Women Ministries Planning Session

NORTHSTAR Café

Sat, Jan 14, 8am

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 15th following lunch

Grace Covenant Church Fellowship Hall

Women Ministries Dinner & Devotional

Thur, Jan 19, 6pm

Zippidy's

Prayers & Sympathy

Our friend and sister in faith, Laura Cascioli, passed away November 3. Laura will certainly be missed in Iron River and at Grace Covenant Church. Her love for us all will be forever Cherished. Memorial Gifts are designated to assist local children in attending Covenant Point Bible Camp.

Congratulations

Jennifer Richards, graduated from Ashford University with two Bachelor degrees, one in Criminal and Social Justice and one in Psychology – she graduated October 31st, and has been accepted into their Masters Program, where she will be working on a Masters in Psychology. She is the daughter of Bev Richards and mom of Trent Baumgartner, Tate, Travis Van Straten and Adrianna Richards.

Jessica & Andy Taylor welcomed another daughter, Jocelyn Joy, 6 lbs, 18" on Friday October 28. Maternal Grandparents are Jan & Morrie Meyer.

Keith & Dianne Rieben welcomed a grandson, Elija, in early November. Elija and his parents live in Gastonia, PA

Ann-Marie & David Frisk welcomed a daughter, Johanna, on Wednesday, the 19th. 8 lbs. 3 oz., 21" long. Paternal grandparents are Marty & Pete Frisk.

Reception for Matt & Beth Lindahl

Mark & Carolyn Lindahl cordially invite
the Grace Covenant Church family
to a dessert reception for their son
Matt and his bride, Beth,
to be held at their home, 160 Meyer Dr,
Wednesday evening, December 28th, at 6pm.
Matt & Beth's wedding banquet was held
Sunday, Nov 20th, in Delray Beach, FL.

Creation Care

Recycled Thought: When we take only what we need, we often find that we have far more resources at our disposal than we can consume for ourselves. When we steward our time and work to provide for our needs, taking what we need for today and trusting God with tomorrow, most of us have an abundance left over. And we're faced with a choice: store up treasure for ourselves here on earth... or give it away. The first story of giving in the Bible is that of Cain and Abel. ...Abel brings the very best of what he has as an offering to God. In contrast, Cain holds back. And as a result, sin pours into his life, damaging his relationship with God and his brother. Right from the start we are taught something fundamental about the human heart: lack of generosity keeps us from God.

-- Dr. Matthew Sleeth, "Hope for Humanity"

Renewing Resource:

It is more blessed to give than to receive. — Acts 20:35

I thought it a wonderful thing that in our Sunday School class on Creation Care the topic, on the first Sunday of Advent, was GIVING. What could giving possibly have to do with Creation Care? The discussion turned out to be more about consuming less. Consuming less so that we have more to give: giving more of what we have stored, consuming less so that there are more resources to share. This idea has been the inspiration for the Jubilee Project done by our youth in recent years. As we enter this season of giving I pray that each of us are affected by the abundance of Advent. I pray that each of us remember that everything on earth belongs to our heavenly father - that we may give graciously of our first fruits in utter confidence that we are being provided for. And may we honestly look at our needs in light of what all of God's creation and all of God's people need.

In His Peace—Angie

Help us stay in touch:

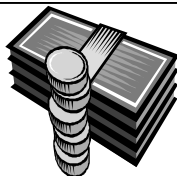
e-mail Addresses - The church office regularly sends out e-mails: Prayer Chain, Weekly Reminders & Updates. If you would like to be included in these e-mails (and are not currently) please let the church office know by e-mailing your preferred e-mail address to gracecov@fast-air.net. **Snowbirds**, please remember to notify the church of your winter mailing address.

Financial Update Sep. 30, 2011

YTD Income \$165,121.69

YTD Expenses \$171,163.13

End of year Budget \$220,545.00



God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9:7

Annual Benevolence Christmas Card Project

The Christmas Card Project began in the early 1980's and for over 25 years has provided gifts to our church members who are homebound and in care centers. The Fellowship and Congregational Care Committee purchases gifts and makes a special visit to each shut-in. Also, donations through this project help assist members, friends and neighbors of Grace Covenant in times of urgent need throughout the year.

Gift-wrapped boxes will be at each entrance for your monetary donation towards this project. Please sign your name on the card next to the box and your name will be included on the Christmas Greetings bulletin insert on Christmas Eve. In lieu of sending Christmas Cards individually, this is a wonderful way to give Christmas Greetings to your church family!

Thanks to all of you who consistently give to the Benevolent Fund—you are being the hands and feet of Christ, allowing him to shine through you and through Grace Covenant as we offer help and encouragement during difficult times in people's lives. This assistance can be the difference between collapsing and first step of a new beginning.

Luke 10:27... "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

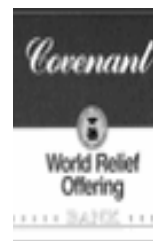


COVENANT WORLD RELIEF
Loving, Serving, and Working Together

The Covenant World Relief Soup Can Offering at Grace Covenant Church is currently going on. Soup can wrappers and covers are available at the church. They will be collected during worship on December 18.

Covenant World Relief (CWR) is the humanitarian aid ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church. We participate in God's transformational community development among the most vulnerable. Disaster relief *saves lives*; whereas community development *transforms communities*.

CWR believes that both parts of our ministry are important, but most of our time and money are spent on transforming lives through community development. It is said that for every dollar spent on disaster risk reduction, every dollar spent on disaster response costs. While our main focus is to see lives changed forever, we recognize the importance of working to reduce the risk of disasters as well as seeking to save lives when disasters do strike.



Community Development projects focus on a variety of areas, including food security, access to clean water and sanitation, women's empowerment, medical care, and micro-finance. The goal of community development is to empower local people to forever transform their own lives and also have an impact on their whole community.

First Givings

Some things are just too good to keep to ourselves. Here's one. I've recently had an influx of daily devotionals about God's provision, about money, about how the Bible tells us to look at that. One in particular I have read and re-read because it has proven to be so true and keeps me watching. It has opened my eyes to the many ways God provides for us. Not only financially - but He provides for our desires, He provides for the management of our time, He provides each of us with the gifts and talents that He will one day call upon us to use for His glory. I want to share this devo with you.....

"But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today." Deuteronomy 8:18 (NIV)

The Bible teaches that God is the source of our finances. He is the one who provides for our needs. What does this mean? It means that, instead of looking to my employer for financial security, I look to God. It means that, instead of looking at my savings account for financial security, I look to God. It means that I don't look to anyone or anything other than God to provide for my needs.

Let me illustrate it this way: When I turn on the water, I know the water doesn't actually come from the faucet. The water comes through the faucet. The water is actually from a reservoir, and the way I happen to receive it is through the faucet.

In the same way, the income that God wants to give you may come through a job or through something or someone else. But the source is always God.

We don't need to worry about which faucet God uses to supply our needs. In a sense he says, "If I turn off one faucet, I can just as easily turn on another. If you lose one job, I can give you another. I am your source, not your job. I am your source, not your bank account."

Worry reveals the places where you are not trusting God. Ask God to help you understand what causes you to not trust him, and ask him to teach you to start trusting him. Look for how he does that. In addition, when you start to worry, talk to God about your concerns.

This devotional got me asking myself - what are the faucets that God has provided for my financial needs over the years. Ponder that for yourself a moment. There are lots of them aren't there? I've started really paying attention not only to what I pray for and those answered prayers but also just the things that I have spoken - you know, kind of off the cuff stuff--- Not really asking for or praying for something financial, just things said in conversation - and then just what I said comes about exactly or better. God is listening to those things with purpose too. What it has reminded me of is that I am important to God, I matter. God wants to provide for me - He wants to provide for you. Here's an example. One of my jobs is to manage a property for someone. One of the responsibilities I get paid for is finding tenants for the property when necessary. I was working with a potential tenant and decided that it was right to give this young man some options. That meant that I provided him with other owners' properties to view - properties that I don't manage. Well this young man chose another property, not the one I manage. Yep - I was kicking myself thinking that I should have just kept my mouth shut -even though I knew that would not have been the right thing to do for that tenant. I had no sooner verbalized this situation with a friend when I was informed that I was going to get a referral fee for sending a tenant to that landlord. A faucet turned on - out of nowhere. I wonder how many faucets God has used to supply our needs, how many has He used to remind us that it's ok, He's got that covered?

I pray you allow your worries about finances to be released to the One who can turn on a faucet. Let Him hem you in from behind and before and see to your needs in ways you never could see coming.

Blessings in Serving Him, Karla

Midwinter Conference 2012

Living Our Affirmations: The Church as a Fellowship of Believers will be the theme of the Midwinter Conference 2012. The purpose of the Midwinter Conference is to advance the good news of Jesus Christ by encouraging and equipping pastoral leaders (paid and unpaid) through education, inspiration, fellowship, and connection with the mission and ministry partnership of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). Pastor James is planning to participate. The dates are Monday, Jan. 30th, through Friday, Feb. 3rd. Prior to the Midwinter Conference, there will be Youth Workers Connection, Jan. 28th-30th, for youth workers from around North America to be refreshed and renewed, and to rekindle their passion for ministry. Linnea Johnson and Lisa Hjelm will be participating from our church. Please keep pastor, Linnea, and Lisa in your prayers.

The offering taken at Sunday Morning Praise goes to support KICY radio. KICY broadcasts from Nome, Alaska and is owned by Arctic Broadcasting Association, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit, affiliated corporation of the Evangelical Covenant Church. KICY serves native

Alaskan villages
Did you know?

throughout the Seward Peninsula, Yukon & Kuskokwim Deltas and the Russian regions of Chukotka, Kamchatka and Siberia. Most of their annual operating budget comes from churches and individual donations. The staff is comprised of full-time and part-time volunteers. For more information go to www.kicy.org

Women Ministries

Praying for Women: Women of Grace, remember there is someone praying for you! You may contact your Praying Woman for any special prayer requests or needs.

A-C Jan Chantiny
D-F Peggy Guzzardo
G- Joan Meyer
H- Eleanor Lindahl
J-K Sylvia Lindwall
L- Betty Lindahl
M-O Betty Honold
P-R Dawn Swanson
S-Sch Jean Lindbeck
Sh-Sw Andrea Oestman
T-Z Jinny Larson

Senior High Ministries

Progressive Dinner

Saturday, Dec 17, 4:30 pm
Meet in the GCC parking lot

CHIC2012

Registration forms for CHIC are now available and are to be completed and turned in by January 17. CHIC2012 will be held in Knoxville, TN July 15-20.

One Life Retreat

February 17—19 @ CPBC

We will be attending the One Life Retreat this winter. We are so excited for a weekend of broomball, laughter, hanging out as a group and most importantly growing in faith.



's Day Dinner

Tuesday, Feb 14, 6pm,
GCC Fellowship Hall

December Schedule:

12/7 Small Group at GCC Sr. Hi. Rm., 6:15 pm
12/14 Small Group at GCC Sr. Hi. Rm., 6:15 pm
12/17 Progressive Dinner, GCC parking lot, 4:30 pm

January Schedule:

1/11 Small Group at GCC Sr. Hi. Rm., 6:15 pm
1/18 Small Group at GCC Sr. Hi. Rm., 6:15 pm
1/17 CHIC2012 registration forms due
1/21 Ice Skating, 6:30 pm
1/25 Small Group at GCC Sr. Hi. Rm., 6:15 pm

College Student Addresses

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Marquette, MI 49355

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Nick Ralston

c/o Mary Kloster
526 W Eagle Terrace
Green Bay, WI 54307

Getting to know... The Strom Family

Greetings, Grace Covenant!

On behalf of my wife Courtney, and our three boys (Caleb - 6, Jackson - 4, and Emmett - 2), we're glad for the opportunity to simply say hello and to thank you for the wonderful welcome received back into this community of faith. Ten years ago, Courtney and I were regular attenders at Grace Covenant, while serving at Covenant Point as interns. While serving at camp, we also helped lead the youth ministry at Grace, chaperoned events at the high school, and developed a special love for the place and people of Iron River and Covenant Point.

In some ways, we always wondered if God's call would lead us back here, but also felt very settled in the north suburbs of Chicago, where I was serving as youth pastor at Winnetka Covenant Church. Little did we know that life would change so significantly and so quickly. This August, I stepped into a new call to be executive director at Covenant Point - a call that has brought Courtney and I—now with three boys, in-tow, back to this community. Caleb - 6, Jackson - 4, and Emmett - 2, are making the transition well, in large part because of the great welcome and care we've received by you all, by the Iron River and school community, and by the Covenant Point community.



Courtney and I reflect often on the faithful care of God in the unexpected, and we sense that this new adventure we're on is going to be an opportunity for growth in many ways. Having traded in Chicago's North Shore for the UP's Northwoods, we're eager to get out onto the ski and hiking trails, lakes and rivers of the UP, and experience with our boys the rugged beauty of this place. Having transitioned from ministry in the church to pastoral leadership in the camping world, we're also eager for Grace Covenant feel like home. This last Sunday makes me feel like we're on our way, as we spent some extra time lingering after worship, helping to set up the Christmas decorations and enjoying the warm soup and conversations!

Eager to be known by you, to serve among you, and to share life and call together.

With Love,

The Stroms (Erik, Courtney, Caleb, Jackson & Emmett)

GRACE COVENANT CHURCH
316 JASPER ST.
IRON RIVER MI 49935



December 2011/ January 2012
GRACE NOTES



COMMUNICATIONS:

Pastor James A. Swanson II

Parsonage 265-3280
Office 265-9951(2)
jswanson@fast-air.net

Office Administrator,

Angela Dohl
angiegc@fast-air.net
or gracecov@fast-air.net

Church Life Coordinator,

Carolyn Lindahl,
carolyngc@fast-air.net

Council Members:

Chair, Mark Lindahl
V. Chair, Frank Stegbauer
Secretary, Linnea Johnson
Treasurer, Tom Staley
Fin. Sec'y, Jim Marcell

Ministry Committee Chairs:

Worship: Jan Meyer
Missions/Social Action:
Karla Menucci
Evan. & Enlistment: Verl Hudson
Women Ministries: Dawn Swanson
& Sylvia Lindwall
Christian Formation:
Teri Sherwood
Fellowship & Congregational Care:
Sara Schultz
Properties: Dave Larson
Financial Oversight: Tom Staley

At-large council members:

Scott Pearson & Ed Lindwall

www.covchurch.org

Central Conference:
www.centralconf.org

Covenant Point Bible Camp
www.cpbc.com 265-2117

Church E-mail:
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**GRACE NOTES/CALENDAR/
WEEKLY SERMONS are always
on the church website. Photos
too! www.gracecovonline.org**

Evangelical Covenant Church